



News Release

Communications New Brunswick

New Brunswick Human Rights Commission

Message / Something can be done about bullying (04/09/23)

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The following message was issued today by Alanna Palmer, the chair of the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission, in response to recent reports of bullying and violence against persons with a disability.

FREDERICTON (CNB) - On Tuesday, the media reported that disabled riders were bullied and attacked on Saint John buses.

People need to know that bullying and violence are unacceptable, and that something can be done about it.

Assaults should be reported to the police. Less extreme forms of harassment based on any of the grounds listed in the Human Rights Act should be reported to the Human Rights Commission.

The human rights complaint process is designed to resolve disputes rather than simply punish offenders. Victims can be compensated for all their expenses and lost income and their hurt feelings and loss of dignity, for example. That is not the case when a person is convicted of an assault.

Service providers need to be aware that they have a responsibility to maintain an environment free of verbal and physical harassment based on any of the grounds listed in the Human Rights Act.

They need to take action to prevent harassment because they are legally responsible for the acts of their employees. Under the Human Rights Act, they may also be responsible for harassment by customers if they could have done something to stop or prevent it, and failed to do so.

While the commission is placing increased emphasis on the speedy resolution of human rights complaints, it realizes that promoting equality also requires education and training. We can provide expertise and training resources to promote respectful working and learning environments.

One of our educational priorities is to ensure that employers, service providers and landlords are aware of their duty to accommodate people with disabilities so as to avoid the discriminatory effect of policies if possible. We also want to make sure that businesses understand the bottom-line benefits of workplaces that are diverse and harassment-free.

Like most New Brunswickers, we are dismayed by reports of this nature. Persons with disabilities have the right to fully participate in our society, and we invite all New Brunswickers to work to overcome the

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barriers that may limit their right to full and genuine citizenship.

04/09/23

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